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ABSTRACT

A brief review of literature on English-as-a-Second-Language instruction and the new immigrants to North America, focuses on four broad topics: children, adults, literacy, and parent involvement. Topics addressed include (1) the social and educational needs of immigrant children; (2) the impact of resettlement; (3) adult language acquisition; (4) citizenship education; (5) developments in literacy research and education; and (6) involvement of limited-English-speaking parents in their children's education. A 41-item bibliography and a list of organizations providing resources are included. (MSE)

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Realizing the Dream:
A Bibliographic Essay

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Realizing the Dream: A Bibliographic Essay

The 1987 NYS TESOL Conference theme, *Realizing the Dream: The New Immigrants*, was refreshing in its holistic and optimistic approach to the teaching of English as a second language, a field in which teachers are becoming increasingly professional and specialized. It was inspiring to be reminded of the broader social and political scene outside our schools, and to reflect upon the roles which students and teachers play in a larger context.

Like many practicing teachers, I feel myself drawn ever more tightly into the small, albeit critical, domain of my own classroom. At times, it seems difficult to break out of that challenging and rewarding vortex, even to keep up with current trends and ideas in the field. Thus, I was motivated to do a review of the literature on "the new immigrants" and to share my reading with other teachers, particularly those working in public schools, adult refugee programs and community colleges, who might not have easy access to extensive libraries.

I began with an ERIC search which, even using limited descriptors, yielded over one hundred references to journal articles and documents published on the topics of "immigrants or refugees, and cultural adjustment or language acquisition" in the past five years. The folly of my thinking was immediately apparent; a comprehensive review of the literature was beyond my scope. Nevertheless, I decided to proceed with a survey or "sampler" approach to familiarize myself and colleagues with some of the literature available. In all, I screened some two hundred articles, the most pertinent of which I mention in this paper, or include in the accompanying bibliography. I reviewed articles on a variety of subjects, which can be roughly categorized into four groups: children, adults, literacy, and parent involvement.

Unfortunately, there is disappointingly little written about the youngest immigrants—children, adolescents and the growing population of children born in the United Sates to immigrant par-

ents. One recent book is *Children and ESL: Integrating Perspectives* (Rigg and Enright, 1986). Although the chapters are interesting, particularly the exhortation by Cazden for ESL teachers to be language advocates for children, there is little new information for professionals actively involved in teaching students of this age group. However, it is a useful compendium, especially the reading chapter by Rigg.

One of the few articles dealing specifically with adolescents is "Language Across the Curriculum" (Coelho, 1982). Coelho examines the types of linguistics skills required of secondary school students in mainstream classes, and capsulizes them onto a three-page chart. Both the outline and the discussion are of interest to teachers and administrators who develop curricula and teaching materials, but must be considered in light of other, more theoretical frameworks.

While the above authors address academic questions, several researchers deal with the affective aspects of settling in a new land. Of special note are two articles published in *TESL Talk*, a Canadian journal. In "Immigrant Children and the Importance of Self-Esteem in Second Language Acquisition," Berryman (1983) posits that self-esteem is a critical variable in second language acquisition, especially among immigrant children who have suffered severe emotional upheaval. It is a valuable article, because it brings findings in the field of psychology to bear on the problems faced in ESL. Berryman defines self-esteem, distinguishing three types (global, specific and task), and examines concepts which are central to an understanding of self-esteem (including empathy, anxiety, attitude and inhibition), as they are relevant to the immigrant child. There is a perceptive paragraph on early adolescents, an age group often neglected in the literature, but included in both Berryman's work and that of Luke and Seesahai, who wrote "Reassessing the Social Needs of the Secondary ESL Student: Notes Toward an Integrated Approach" (1983).

Luke and Seesahai, who are thoroughly grounded in a Freirean approach, pose some challenging ideas in considering the question, "How do we go about encouraging a critical attitude among students which will enable maximal social participation and the avoidance of institutional exploitation?" (p. 47). Luke and Seesahai discuss racism, occupational mobility and biculturalism. They conclude by recommending an integrated approach, combining linguistically-based materials, a basic-skills organization and a Freirean/language

experience method (p. 52). This article is stimulating because it confronts many of the underlying yet often unspoken issues faced by secondary school teachers.

"Impact on Resettlement on Refugee Children" (Huyck and Fields, 1981) cites evidence which suggests that the effects of exposure to extended violence and terror are likely to be more pronounced in children than in adults, and that there is a very high risk factor for children aged six to eleven years, especially boys. However, these authors report that trauma (including separation) suffered before the age of three to six months will not result in adverse psychological consequences. Huyck and Field stress the importance of cultural continuity in adaptation (usually provided by ethnic enclaves) and of treating the family as a whole. They believe that it is very helpful if the agents of institutions are from the same culture, which is good news for the growing number of refugees acting as sponsors to new families.

Unlike children, adult second language learners are the focus of considerable research covering a wide range of concerns. Kleinmann (1985) articulates the dilemma felt by teachers of adult Southeast Asian refugees when he observes that traditional theory and practice are often unsuccessful. Following Krashen's line of thinking, Kleinmann suggests that adult refugees may be "low input generators" not actively involved with the second language; that, indeed, they are "retreating from second language interactions and reluctant to exploit practice opportunities" (p. 13).

Other researchers have also noted that the ESL classroom is often the only source of input for adult refugees (d'Anglejan, 1984; Weinstein, 1984). They are unanimous in recommending a natural, informal, communicative approach, perhaps outside a formal classroom setting. Since my experience suggests that most teachers of adult refugees employ such methods, it is surprising not to find more articles describing specific programs and techniques, and I hope to see more on this topic in the future. It would be interesting, for example, to learn to what factors proficient refugee learners attribute their success, and to know what techniques successful teachers use.

Two statistical studies of adult immigrant language acquisition were conducted by d'Anglejan et al. (1986) and Trevise and Forquier (1986). The former compared two groups of language learners (Southeast Asians and a mixed group comprised mainly of Poles and Latin Americans). Foreign Service Institute interviews

were used to measure oral proficiency at the close of a thirty-week intensive language program, and six months later. The results were discouraging, as only minimal proficiency levels were attained. Trevise and Forquier described a study involving Spanish-speaking Latin Americans in France, which is noteworthy for the European perspective it provides.

Of course, literature abounds in various aspects of language acquisition by adult learners, but the focus is generally on foreign students at the university level. There is definitely a need for more research involving non-university adult learners, including immigrants who acquire English without formal instruction.

The studies mentioned above share a common concern for the difficulties adult immigrants experience in learning a new language. Some writers are now focusing their attention on methods and curricula as possible factors. Influenced by the thinking of Brazilian educator Paolo Freire (1985, 1981, 1970a, 1970b), many teachers are beginning to reexamine basic assumptions underlying commonly-used curricula and materials. Auerbach (1986) identified eight key characteristics of competency-based adult education and examined their suitability for ESL instruction. She believes that a competency-based approach teaches students to "receive" rather than "generate" knowledge; limits students to specific predetermined social and economic roles; inhibits the development of critical thinking; and indeed, may be culturally biased, since, for example, competency-based programs measure progress quantitatively and behaviorally, and are individually- and goal-oriented. In an earlier article, Auerbach and Burgess (1985) analyzed a range of selections for survival ESL texts, and found that they neither accurately reflect immigrants' reality or empower them to shape that reality. Auerbach's assessment of competency-based education is powerful and thought-provoking, and relevant to all teachers who are being encouraged to teach specific task-oriented skills.

Keeping in mind Auerbach's critique of a life-skills approach and its limitations, there are two adult language programs described in the literature which provide good examples of such an approach, but which could be incorporated into a more comprehensive adult program. One is precisely English-for-employment (Beare, 1984), which constitutes the final three weeks of a 24-week course. This is a practical report which even includes the curriculum.

A second, "Hearing-specific Citizenship Education for ESL Adults" (Grozinski, 1984), begins with a discussion of the definition

of citizenship and then presents a course-planning model. The author considers the identification of learner needs, methodology and evaluation, and gives examples of worksheets. This, too, is a very practical article which is sure to be of interest to teachers who help prepare immigrants for citizenship. It is hoped, however, that competency-based components will be added to programs with Auerbach's critique and Freire's problem posing method in mind.

Currently, Freire's philosophy is widely discussed among professionals involved in the development of literacy. He has written extensively, and his ideas have been adapted to the field of ESL, most notably by Wallerstein. In "The Teaching Approach of Paolo Freire" (1983a), Wallerstein explains Freire's basic tenets, such as the belief that people are "active creators of culture, not passive recipients of history" (p. 191) and that they can be agents of change. There are three stages in the Freirean method: listening, dialogue and action. The teacher's role, rather than as a conveyor of information, is that of "participant in a two-way process" (p. 191). Problem-posing is the inductive questioning process which shapes dialogue. *Language and Culture in Conflict: Problem-posing in the ESL Classroom* (1983b) is Wallerstein's textbook based on Freire's method.

Another valuable source of information about recent trends in literacy is Weinstein's article, "Literacy and Second Language Acquisition: Issues and Perspectives" (1984). It is an excellent overview of literacy research. Weinstein reviews several conflicting theories as she discusses the relationship between cognition and literacy, culturally different forms of literacy, and the social organization of literacy. The notion that literacy is not "a set of mechanical coding and decoding skills, but rather a way of processing information which will affect ways of interacting" (p. 477) seems especially pertinent to ESL instruction, and complementary to Freire's philosophy.

The effect of native language literacy on second language acquisition is the subject of a study being conducted among Haitian immigrants (Burtoff, 1984 as reported in Penfield, 1986). Preliminary findings suggest that native language literacy instruction enhances self-esteem and aids in the second language development process, just as Cummins' research points to the development of cognitive academic language proficiency (CALP) in the native language as a significant factor in the acquisition of CALP in a second language (1980a). Penfield, recognizing that the multitude of

languages spoken by immigrants makes adult bilingual education unrealistic, recommends a re-examination of heterogeneous grouping (in which students of mixed literacy and/or proficiency levels are placed together). She also questions the appropriateness of a formal school setting for adult limited English proficient (LEP) literacy instruction and offers a sheltered workshop setting as a possible alternative.

The question of adult LEP literacy takes on an increased significance in light of data gathered in a literacy survey conducted by the Census Bureau in 1982. These data indicate that 13% of the U.S. adult population is nonliterate (a figure considered by many to be low; some estimate it to be as high as 20%). Of this 13%, 37% do not speak English at home; 82% were born outside of the United States; 21% entered the U.S. within the last six years; 42% live in neighborhoods where English is the second language; and up to 82% are nonliterate in their native language (1982 Census Bureau Literacy Survey, as reported in Bliss, 1986). Haverson (1986) reports that 48% of the LEP adults surveyed are nonliterate.

It is clear, then, that literacy is a major issue for ESL professionals working with adults, but it also has serious ramifications for teachers of school-aged children, because of the effect that parents' literacy has on their involvement in their children's education. Haverson rightly points out that the low literacy rate among LEP parents has enormous implications for school involvement, affecting everything from parents' ability to read school messages to their effectiveness at promoting the development of skills and knowledge that the parents themselves do not possess. Haverson recommends that teachers be aware of the high level of illiteracy among LEP parents, that literacy programs develop meaningful activities for the home, and that educators view literacy as empowerment, in a Freirean sense (p. 60). In addition, he presents a taxonomy of ten meaning-centered objectives (drawn from the theories of Goodman and Frank) which could easily and most satisfactorily form the nucleus of a literacy curriculum for learners of any age (p. 59).

Given the high rate of illiteracy among LEP parents, it is unsettling to learn that the techniques most frequently used by teachers to involve parents at home stress reading and books. In an extensive study of English-speaking teachers, administrators, parents and students, Epstein (1986) found that the three strategies most often used are: asking parents to read to their children or listen to them read; requesting parents to take their children to the library;

and loaning books and teaching materials to parents for use with youngsters at home (p. 9). Epstein states that other practices were used less frequently and were reported by teachers to be less effective. Paradoxically, these other activities are precisely the kind that LEP parents (literate or not) could more easily participate in. They include discussions, parent observations, contacts and informal learning (not to mention the sharing of non-academic skills such as gardening and sewing that could be used as the basis of in-class academic development). Perhaps ESL teachers could encourage their colleagues in other content areas to request assistance of this kind in order to ensure the participation of LEP parents.

Another scholar (Collier, 1986) places the issue of LEP parent involvement squarely in the larger context of majority-minority parent involvement. She emphasizes the diversity of minority parents as a group, while noting that school reinforces the linguistic and cultural identity of majority parents. She observes that American education in the twentieth century has been characterized by a conflict of power between parents (the community) and professional educators, and is a strong advocate of two-way bilingual programs. For communities where that is not feasible, the following suggestion is noteworthy: "Linking the life of the school with that of the community in all its diversity is one means of helping all parents achieve a stronger sense of ownership in the education of their children" (p. 74).

Teachers and administrators who are looking for ways to improve home-school communication and are considering a survey of parents will find Blakely's report (1983) useful. The report explains the survey method employed and the results obtained in one school district serving Southeast Asian refugees.

The desire for enhanced home-school communication prompted the Nebraska State Department of Education to write a multilingual parent guide (1984). Although it is specific to Nebraska schools, it is comprehensive and could easily be adapted to any district. It is available in five bilingual editions (English-Hmong, -Lao, -Spanish, -Khmer and -Vietnamese) and covers an extensive list of topics, including enrollment, curriculum, physical education, homework and grades, clothing and grooming, absences and illnesses, disciplinary action and moving. It is written in straightforward and jargon-free English. Since the Spanish edition was well written and culturally appropriate, we can hope that the other translations are equally good.

Another bilingual parent guide (available in English-Khmer, -Lao, -Vietnamese and -Spanish) is intended for a vocationally oriented bilingual curriculum, but in fact consists of bilingual lesson activities for parents and students to do together, some of which are general in nature and could serve as models for a parent involvement handbook. The activities about open house, attendance rules and club participation are examples.

Parent involvement is but one of many issues, questions and concerns addressed in the growing body of ESL literature. While some exciting research is on a theoretical level, much of what is written has direct implication for classroom practice. It is hoped that this brief survey will serve to familiarize teachers with a sampling of the professional literature available to us, and to inspire more teachers to contribute their ideas and expertise.

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ORGANIZATIONS PROVIDING RESOURCES[1]

The Asia Society, 725 Park Avenue, New York, NY 10007. (212) 288-6400

Center for Applied Linguistics, 1118 22nd Street NW, Washington, DC 20037. (202) 429-9292

Center for Migration Studies, 209 Flagg Place, Staten Island, NY 10304. (718) 351-8800

Center for Teaching International Relations, University of Denver, Denver, CO 80208. (303) 871-3106

Center for US-Mexican Studies, D-010, University of California-San Diego, La Jolla, CA 92093. (619) 452-4503.

Central American Resource Center, PO Box 2327, Austin, TX 78768. (512) 476-9841

Department of Justice, Immigration and Naturalization Service, 425 Eye Street NW, Washington, DC 20530. (202) 633-2000, or INS, 26 Federal Plaza, New York, NY 10278. (212) 206-6500

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ERIC Clearinghouse for Social Studies, Social Studies Development Center, Indiana University, 2805 East Tenth Street, Bloomington, IN 47405. (812) 335-3838

Foreign Policy Association, 205 Lexington Avenue, New York, NY 10016. (212) 481-8450

Freedom House, 48 East 21st Street, New York, NY 10010. (212) 473-9691

Global Perspectives in Education, 218 East 18th Street, New York, NY 10003. (212) 475-0850.

Information Center on Children's Cultures, US Committee for UNICEF, 331 East 38th Street, New York, NY 10016. (212) 686-5522. (Please provide a stamped, self-addressed envelope with written requests for information.)

New Immigrants in the California Classroom History Project, Graduate School of Education, University of California, Berkeley, CA 94720. (415) 642-4782. Paula Gillett, Project Coordinator.

Refugee Policy Group, 1424 16th Street NW, Suite 401, Washington, DC 20036. (202) 387-3015.

Stanford Program on International and Cross-Cultural Education (SPICE). Lou Henry Hoover Bulding, Room 200, Stanford University, Stanford, CA 94305-2319. (415) 497-1114.

United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees, Palais des Nations. CH-1211 Geneva 10, Switzerland. Phone 022-31-02-61.

United States Committee for Refugees, 20 West 40th Stret, New York, NY 10018. (212) 398-9142. (USCR is a specialized program of the American Council for Nationalities Service.)